

**Testimony to the House Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee
re: HB 4031**

February 3, 2026

**Ben Brint, Senior Climate Program Director
Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance equitable, innovative, and collaborative solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Re: Oregon Environmental Council support for HB 4080

Chair Lively and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Oregon Environmental Council and our thousands of members throughout the state, I write in strong support of HB 4031. This legislation creates a narrow, time-limited exemption from Energy Facility Siting Council permitting for large renewable energy projects — and it does so precisely when Oregon needs it most.

Oregon has committed to building 30,000 MW of clean non-hydro energy by 2040. We have built roughly 5,800 MW so far — meaning we still need to bring nearly 24,200 MW online in the next fifteen years. That is not a goal we can meet by standing still. At the same time, recent federal policy changes have put 30–40% renewable energy tax credits at serious risk, creating a hard deadline for projects to demonstrate they have begun construction. For 6–12 major projects currently in the pipeline — representing thousands of prevailing-wage jobs — Oregon's EFSC permitting process may be the bottleneck standing between them and that deadline.

EFSC's framework was designed decades ago for nuclear and fossil fuel facilities. Its stated timeline runs 18 to 24 months, but developers consistently report actual timelines closer to 30 to 45 months. Smaller projects can sidestep this through county permitting, but large-acreage renewable projects are funneled into EFSC's lengthier process by statute. The result is that projects which are otherwise shovel-ready — and which the Governor has directed agencies to expedite under Executive Order 25-2025 — have no viable path to meet state permitting timelines before federal tax credit deadlines hit.

HB 4031 solves this with a carefully scoped exemption. It does not eliminate EFSC oversight broadly — it creates a specific off-ramp for renewable energy projects that meet clear criteria: the facility must produce power exclusively from solar, wind, geothermal, or marine energy; the developer must obtain local land use approval and submit that application on or before December 31, 2028; and the developer must provide written notification confirming that construction has begun in a manner that qualifies for federal tax credits under the Internal Revenue Code. These are not loopholes. They are guardrails — ensuring that only projects with genuine federal financing stakes and legitimate local approvals can use this pathway.

The stakes here are concrete. A single 500 MW project supports 500 to 800 skilled construction jobs at peak, all under prevailing wage and apprenticeship requirements tied to the federal tax credits this bill helps secure. Losing those credits does not just slow clean energy deployment — it forces utilities into higher-cost procurement, pushing electricity rate increases onto Oregon consumers. HB 4031 keeps lower-cost clean energy on track, secures billions in private investment, and positions Oregon as a national leader in getting renewable projects built.

Oregon Environmental Council and our thousands of members across the state urge you to support HB 4031.

Sincerely,

Ben Brint
Senior Climate Program Director
Oregon Environmental Council
benb@oeonline.org